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NCBC GULFPORT
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LETTER REGARDING GRAVE CONCERNS OF HANDLING, DISPOSING AND
REMEDICATION OF DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES NCBC GULFPORT MS
7/19/1995
GULF COAST TENANTS ORGANIZATION

39501-GENERAL
13.01.00.0036

Gulf Coast Tenants Organiz:
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601-868-8380 Fax 601-838-0174

July 19, 1995

Captain DiGeorge, Base Commander
Mr. Gordon Crane, Environmental Officer
Naval Constrction Battalion Center
Gulfport, Mississippi

AUG 7 1995

Dear Captain DiGeorge and Mr. Crane:

This letter voices grave concerns regarding your handling, disposing, and remediation of dangerous substances on the Naval Construction Battalion Center(NCBC) site in Gulfport, Mississippi. This letter questions the value you place on the lives of the African-American, poor and working people surrounding the base and your value of property of citizens around the base.

We appreciate you informing us that our Congressmen voted to cut a large part of the Defense Environmental Restoration Account (DERA) and there are no funds allocated sufficient cleanup. But, we must press all involved to make sure that our lives are not sacraficed here in Gulfport to pay for highly questionable military adventures abroad, and tax cuts for the rich.

We are glad that you have finally admitted that hazardous materials, especially dioxins, have migrated off the base onto neighboring property. But, we are concerned that you have made the classical mistake---minimizing dioxin's risk to people's health, and basically saying you are being so carefull with this dioxin laced soil that we should not worry, but be happy. Don't worry be happy paraphrases what base officials said when you first burned and buried the dioxin based agent orange at the NCBC site.

A casual observance of the recent dioxin cleanup reveals carelessness: the telephone company's all black crew that were digging at the site had no experience in hazardous materials, nor did they know that dioxins were present at the site they were digging; you have not issued health data to Navy personnel who may have contact with dioxins; you have not informed residents of the presence of dioxins and the risks of dioxins to health at the predominantly African-American housing project that adjoins the digging site, although many of their children play and they walk within feet of the digging; as the digging has occured we have had hard rains, and the waters have

migrated into Turkey creek and the adjacent housing project; Navy personnel playing down the risk of injury to health at the July Restoration Advisory Board meeting.

We request the following: a meeting with the base commander and Mr. Crane; immediate cessation of all excavation until your total remediation plans can be reviewed by competent independent scientist acquired by the neighboring community and paid for by the NCBC; submission to us a copy of your latest sampling data that showed the presence of dioxins; holding a community forum to explain to communities around the base all sides of the dispute among scientists regarding the risk to health of dioxins; making public the names of the telephone company employees who were digging at the site; and any other information that can show a certainty that you have taken appropriate steps to protect the health of base communities and workers.

Has the Navy base been tested for the existence of furans, a substance caused by the incomplete compustion of dioxins? Furans is the most dangerous substance known. Is it possible that when dioxins were burned at the NCBC furans were created?

Please know that we have supported our government in the cold war against the Soviet Union and have made grave sacrafices in reduced dollars in education, housing, health care, to keep our nation's defenses strong. As a nation, we did not question your storing or burning, or burying dioxins in our community or elsewhere.

One philosopher noted and we agree that we live in a world and at a time where "facts are uncertain, stakes high, and decisions urgent." We must be involved in your decisions now. Our lives depend upon it. We are afraid to depend on the Navy doing the right thing, because our past dependence has gotten us where we are now.

Please be clear. We have enough of other things to involve ourselves. We don't want to run your base and couldn't if we had the opportunity. We just want to see justice done.

Sincerely yours,

Mamie Worthen

Mamie Worthen

Mary Griffin

Mary Griffin

Captain DiGeorge, Commander
Naval Construction Batallion Center, Gulfport, Ms Page 3

CC: President William Clinton; Vice-President Al Gore; Senator Bob Dole; Rep. Newt Gingrich; Senator Trent Lott; Senator Thad Chocran; Congressman Eugene Taylor, 5th Congressional District; Ms. Sherri Wasserman Goodman, Assistant Secretary of Environmental Restoration, Department of Defense; Miss. Attorney General Mike Moore, Ms. Elsie Munsell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Environment and Safety, Dept of Navy; Miss. Legislative Rep. Frances Fredericks; Mr. Roy Necaie, Miss. Region VIII Housing Authority; Mr. Bobby Eleuterius, Chairman Harrison County Board of Supervisors; Supervisor Robin Alfred Midcalf, Harrison County District #4; Gulfport Mayor Ken Combs, Gulfport; Gulfport Councilman Jimmie Jenkins; Rev. Lee Adams, Little Rock Baptist Church, Gulfport, Communications Workers of America, Gulfport AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, *The Sun Herald*, Biloxi; WLOX-TV 13 Gulfport; *The Jackson Advocate*, *The Clarior Ledger*; *The Mississippi Press Ledger*, The Associated Press, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Knight-Rider Newspapers*, AP Radio, *The Times Picayune*, *The Greene County Democrat*, *The Baltimore African-American*